

## Corner: UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative

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### First Phase 2 Activities of the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative (2007–2010)

#### Second Edition of the LCA Award for Non-OECD Countries

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The Life Cycle Initiative is a joint programme of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC). It responds to the call from governments for a life cycle economy in the Malmö Declaration (2000) and contributes to the development of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes (Marra-kech Process) to promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, as requested at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Johannesburg in 2002. UNEP and SETAC, aware of the need to support a global dissemination and implementation of Life Cycle Approaches based on the ISO 14040 series, set up the Life Cycle Initiative in 2002.

During the **Phase 1** (2002–2006), the Initiative developed and disseminated practical tools for evaluating the opportunities, risks, and trade-offs associated with products and services over their whole life cycle. The main deliverables produced during this first period include Guides and Training Materials on the areas of Life Cycle Impact Assessment, Life Cycle Inventories, Social Life Cycle Assessment and Life Cycle Management, a Life Cycle Database Registry, three regional networks (in Africa, Asia and Latin America) and an open forum with more than 1,000 members from all over the world (Fig. 1).

Among the last deliverables of Phase 1, a new UNEP/SETAC publication for businesses has been published in August 2007: Life Cycle Management – A Business Guide to Sustainability. In this Guide companies recount how it is possible to expand business while minimizing the environmental and social bur-

dens along entire product life cycles but still remain profitable. It also shows how to incorporate environmental, economic, and social aspects of products into business and how LCM can be adapted and introduced in any kind of organization.

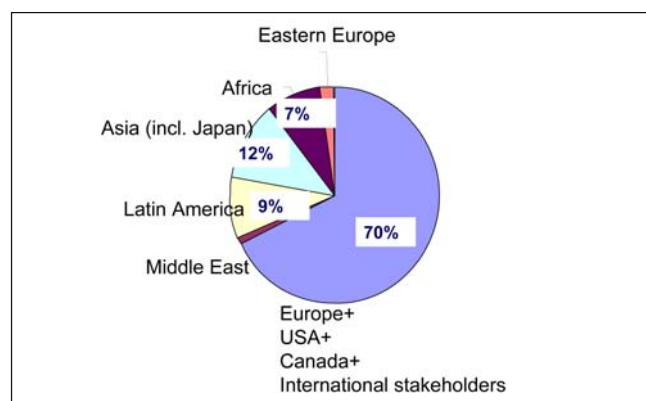
A last Phase 1 activity was also the closing ceremony (28 August 2007) of the First Edition of the LCA Award 2006–2007 where pioneering works and individual commitment to Life Cycle Assessments (LCA) in developing countries were acknowledged by the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative Award 2007 and the sponsors of this activity. Research to assess the environmental impact of sugar production in South Africa, newsprint paper production in Zimbabwe and new approaches to assess impacts on biodiversity in Brazil belonged to the most outstanding projects. More information on the projects and the winners can be found in the website of the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative.

**Phase 2** of the Life Cycle Initiative (2007–2010) will run under the mission "to bring science-based Life Cycle approaches into practice worldwide". The following types of projects are to be supported:

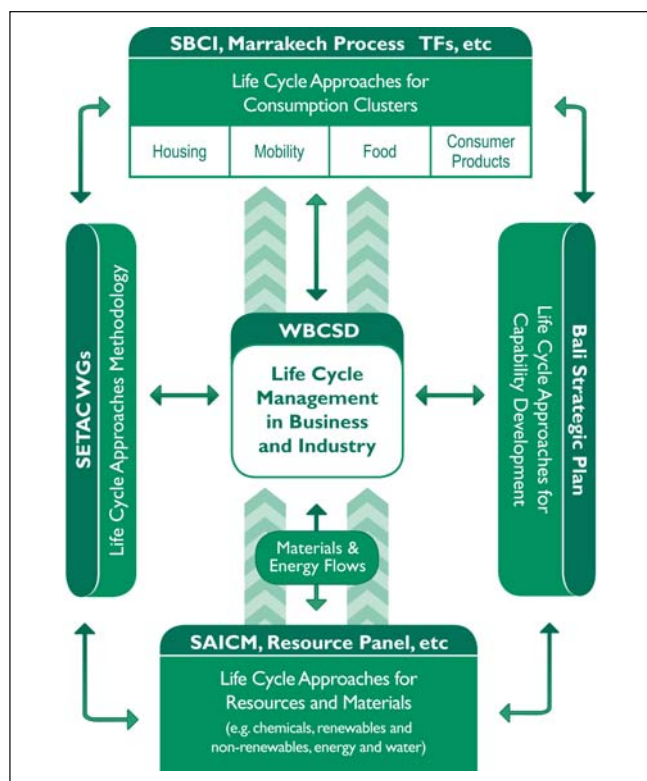
- **Group Projects** – Carried out by groups of experts within the Life Cycle Initiative; partial funding available from LCI.
- **Commissioned Projects** – Carried out by a single organization within the Life Cycle Initiative; complete funding available from LCI.
- **Co-governed Projects** – Carried out by external organizations or individuals and meeting the Initiative's mission; funded externally and managed jointly by the Initiative and the Project leader. A certain amount is provided to the Initiative to fund the follow-up and review activities of the project.
- **Endorsed Projects** – Proposed by an external organization for endorsement; if they meet the Life Cycle Initiative's mission the project is endorsed, but will be funded and managed externally.

As part of the preparatory activities, an open call for expressions of interest and a call for ideas for Phase 2 were launched. Following the calls, we received over 140 expressions of interest and nearly 40 proposed projects within five work areas (Fig. 2).

Regarding the proposed projects, 57% of them were submitted by universities, 40% came from Latin America and 30% from Africa. The Work Area that attracted the most



**Fig. 1:** Regional distribution of interested persons in the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative 2007 (basis: 1,000 persons)



**Fig. 2:** Results of the two calls for Expressions of Interest and Ideas regarding Phase 2

proposals is the one on Capability Development with 37% of the total amount, followed by the Work Area on Methodologies with 29%.

So far 11 projects have already been endorsed and additional 14 ones will be supported through the Second Edition of the LCA Award 2008. Thirteen projects are still under review. The following are some selected examples of first projects being carried-out or to be initiated during Phase 2 which have their own funding or joint efforts to raise funds are being done:

#### a. Life Cycle Approaches for Methodologies

- Supporting the set up of a Life Cycle Inventory data format converter (on-going).
- Maintenance of the Life Cycle Inventory database registry (on-going).
- Integration of socio-economic aspects into LCA (on-going).
- Assessment of Water Use and Consumption within LCA (funds to be raised).
- European Co-ordination Action for Innovation in LCA for Sustainability (CALCAS) (on-going).

#### b. Life Cycle Approaches for Resources and Materials

- Training workshops with the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM) (on-going)

#### c. Life Cycle Approaches for Consumption Clusters

- Improvement of Characterization Factors in Life Cycle Impact Assessment of Ecotoxicity (on-going)
- Indoor Exposure Assessment within LCA (on-going)
- Training workshops with UNEP's Sustainable Building and Construction Initiative (SBCI) (on-going)

#### d. Life Cycle Approaches for Capability Development

- Capacity building for developing countries at various conferences (e.g. CILCA 2009 in Chile and LCM 2009 in South Africa) (on-going).
- Second phase of Life Cycle Awards for projects using Life Cycle approaches in developing countries (on-going).

#### e. Life Cycle Management in Business and Industry

- Establishing a Life Cycle Management roundtable with the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) (on-going).

The bottom-up process to generate ideas and to join the Work Areas is not closed and you are invited to submit your proposals and expressions of interest as instructed in our website.

Moreover, we welcome your support of any kind to carry out the best projects proposed.

**For more information** please contact the Secretariat of the UNEP/SETAC Life Cycle Initiative at [sc@unep.fr](mailto:sc@unep.fr) or visit the webpage <http://lcanitiative.unep.fr/>

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